

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 56

Introduced by Assembly Member Levine

August 7, 2006

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 56—Relative to forestry.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 56, as introduced, Levine. Forestry: Federal Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

This measure would urge the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to immediately recognize and adopt the petition submitted by the Governor of the State of California to protect all 4.4 million acres of the Inventoried Roadless Areas within the national forests of California, in order to ensure the protection of the those forest lands.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Forest Service, roads have
2 been built in 2.8 million of the 5.8 million total acres of
3 Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs); and

4 WHEREAS, In 2001, after more than 600 public hearings, and
5 a record 1.6 million comments received, the United States Forest
6 Service adopted the federal Roadless Area Conservation Rule, as
7 set forth in 66 Federal Register 3244 (the federal roadless rule),
8 protecting 58.5 million acres or one-third of the remaining wild
9 national forest land in the country from most commercial logging
10 and road building; and

11 WHEREAS, During public comment on the draft federal
12 roadless rule, over 140,000 Californians filed comments with the
13 United States Forest Service, more than 136,000 of which

1 favored even stronger protections than the agency had proposed;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, California contains 4.4 million acres protected by
4 the federal roadless rule, 20% of the state's national forests; and

5 WHEREAS, In the coming years, California will face the
6 challenges of dramatic population growth that is projected to add
7 12 million people to the state by 2030 and will result in
8 tremendous pressure to encroach upon undeveloped lands; and

9 WHEREAS, Swift and decisive action is needed to preserve
10 roadless areas, as the preservation of roadless areas is essential to
11 protecting both economic and intrinsic values for current and
12 future generations of Californians; and

13 WHEREAS, Protecting the state's forests is essential to
14 providing clean high quality drinking water for millions of
15 Americans and Californians, particularly in areas with drought
16 and habitats for threatened and endangered species; and

17 WHEREAS, Roadless areas are typically characterized by
18 high quality and undisturbed water, air, and soil upon which
19 humans, flora, and fauna depend; and

20 WHEREAS, High quality wildlife and fish habitat and
21 flourishing ecological diversity is inherent in undisturbed,
22 ecologically intact lands, and limitations on road construction
23 and reconstruction benefit fish and wildlife that live on these
24 lands by limiting direct and indirect adverse effects that are the
25 result of the human activities that roads invite, such as
26 road-related disturbance, poaching, pollution, arson, and
27 introduction of invasive species; and

28 WHEREAS, Roadless areas provide natural beauty and
29 recreation, including hunting, fishing, cycling, and hiking, that
30 are central components to a high quality of life for Californians
31 and encourage the expansion and diversification of tourism,
32 providing jobs and contributing to the gross state product; and

33 WHEREAS, California has long recognized the importance of
34 forest lands and the need to discourage further expansion into
35 forested areas that will result in timber harvesting, destruction of
36 bird habitat, soil erosion, sedimentation, destruction of fish and
37 other wildlife habitat, and the reduction of air and water quality;
38 and

39 WHEREAS, The Bush administration has revoked the federal
40 roadless rule and instituted a state-by-state petition process

1 through which state governors, if they comply with burdensome
2 data gathering, analysis, and other process requirements, may
3 request the United States Forest Service not to drill, pave, and
4 clearcut wild forests that were previously protected by the federal
5 roadless rule; and

6 WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of the people of California
7 to provide protection to these IRAs for current and future
8 generations, so as not to jeopardize the economic and ecological
9 values afforded by these forests; now, therefore, be it

10 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
11 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges the U.S. Secretary
12 of Agriculture to immediately recognize and adopt the petition
13 submitted by the Governor of the State of California to protect all
14 4.4 million acres of the Inventoried Roadless Areas within the
15 national forests of California, in order to ensure the protection of
16 those forest lands; and be it further

17 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit
18 copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of
19 the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representative,
20 to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and
21 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
22 States, and to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.